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イースト・プレス

The Dragon's School is on The Top of The Mountain

by Kui Ryoko

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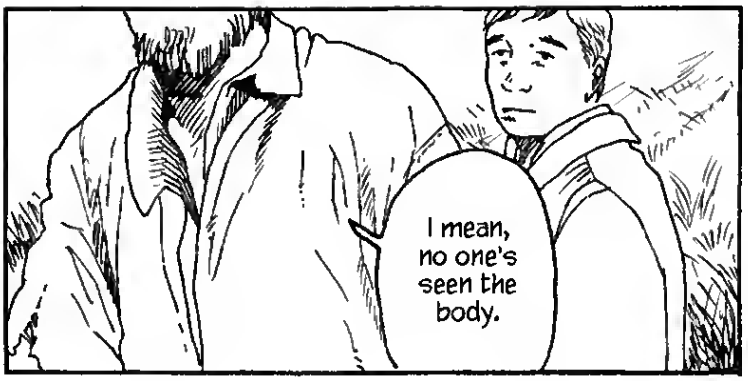
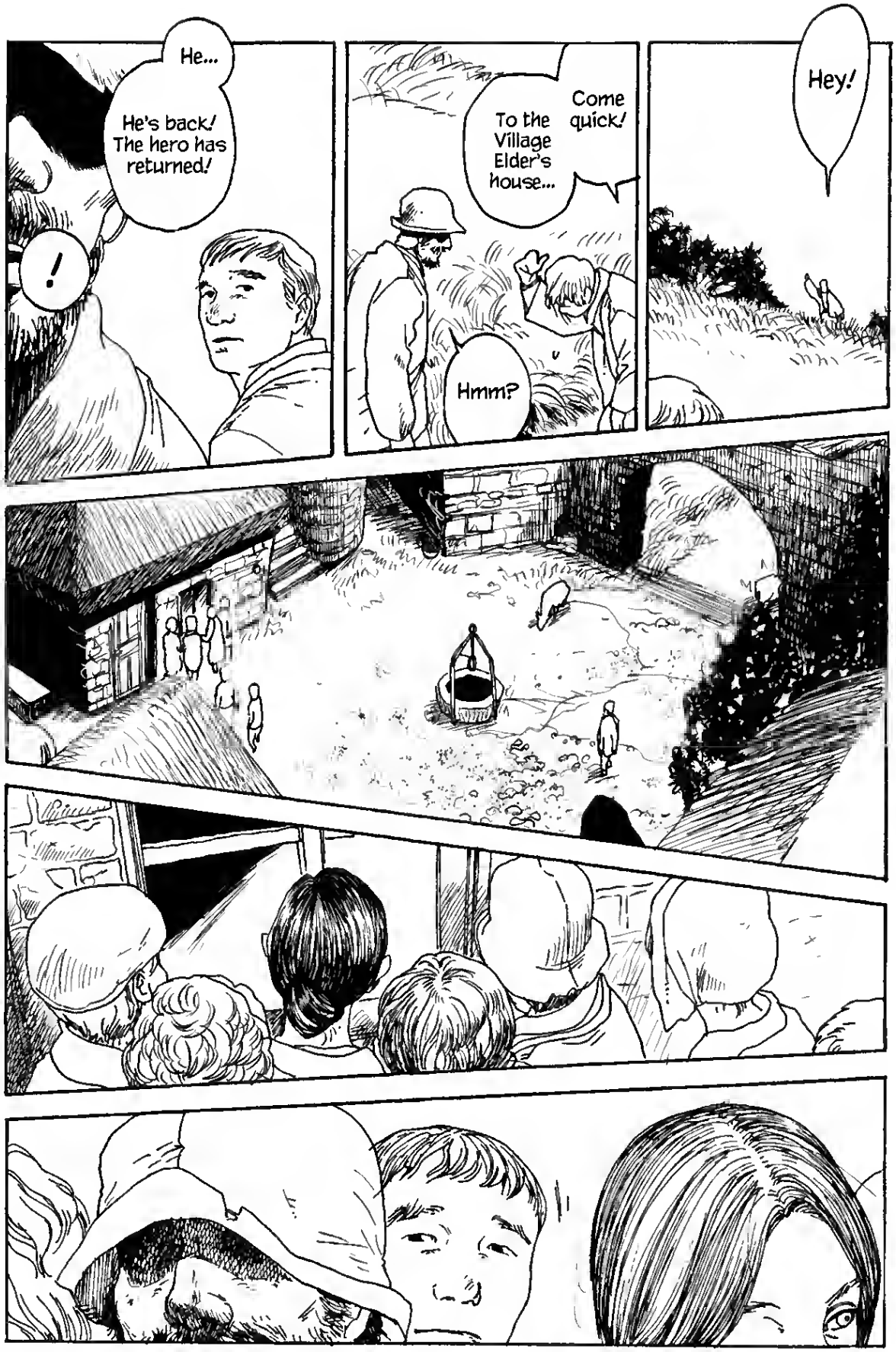
They got into our crops again...
Home

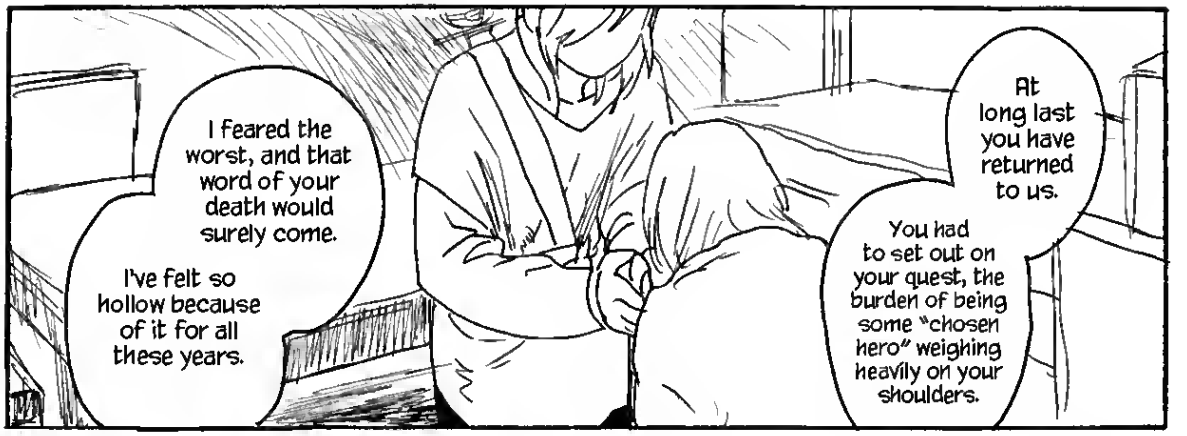
Is it monsters again?
Aye, and now we've lost yet another crop.

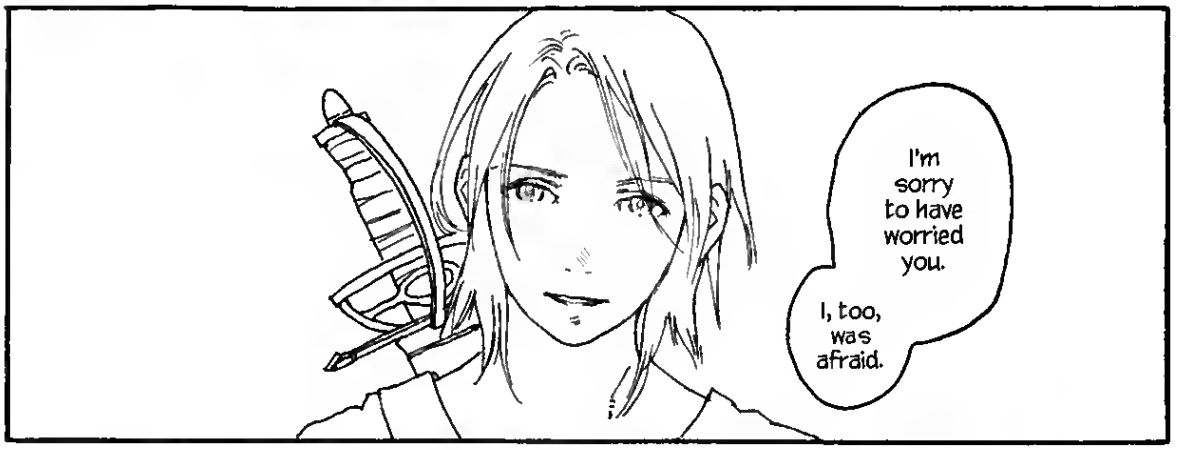
You'd think the monsters would just die off, but it seems like there's even more of 'em.
I wonder if the Beast-Lord really was defeated.

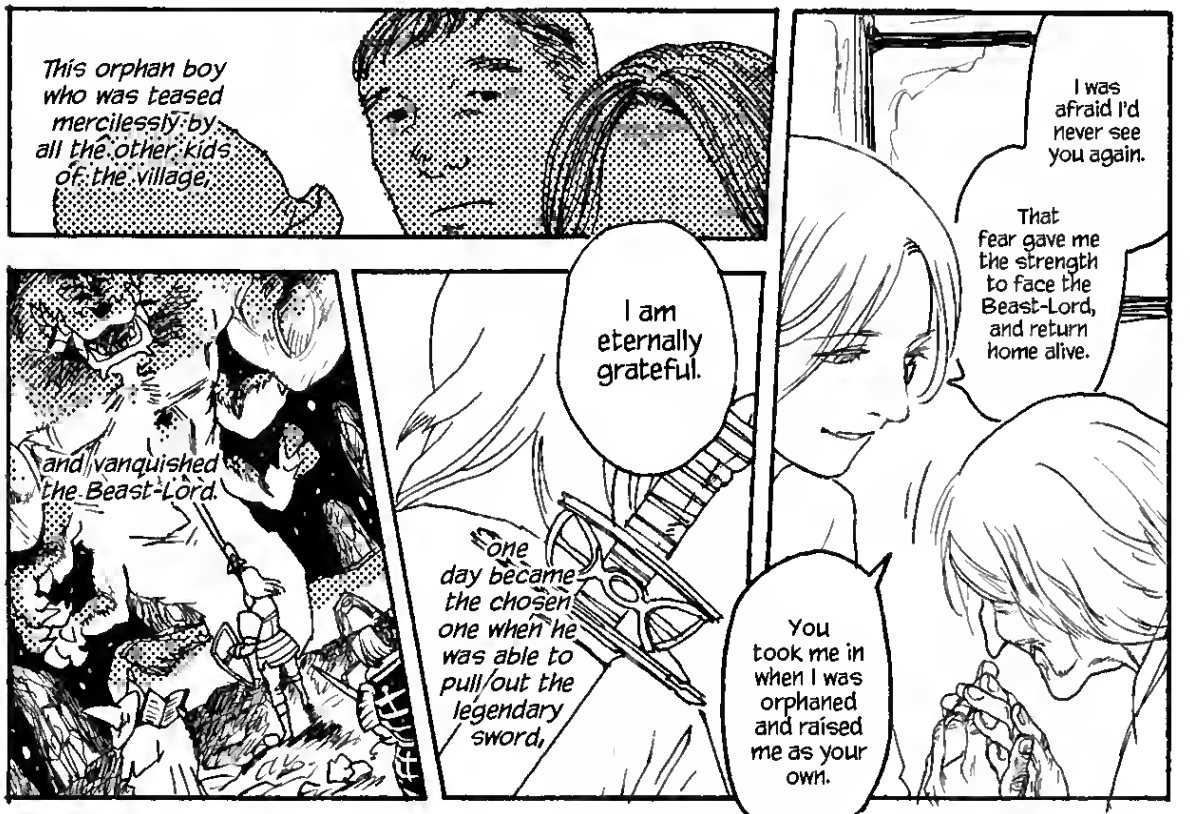

I mean, no one's seen the body.

How many times is it now?
Hmph.
The damn wretches only eat up the ripe ones and leave the rest.


He...
He's back! The hero has returned!
!
Come quick!
To the Village Elder's house...
Hmm?
Hey!

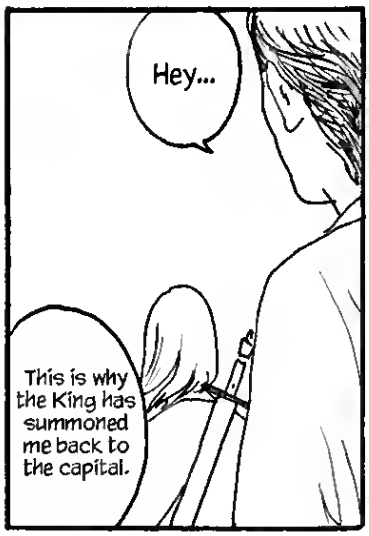

At long last you have returned to us.
You had to set out on your quest, the burden of being some "chosen hero" weighing heavily on your shoulders.
I feared the worst, and that word of your death would surely come.
I've felt so hollow because of it for all these years.

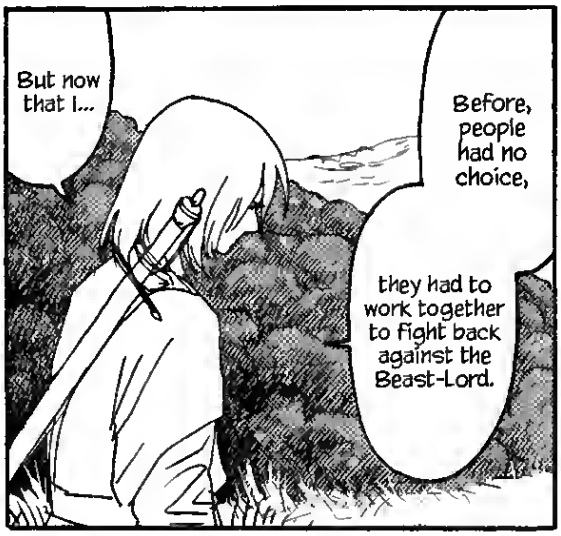

I'm sorry to have worried you.
I, too, was afraid.


This orphan boy who was teased mercilessly by all the other kids of the village,
I was afraid I'd never see you again.
That fear gave me the strength to face the Beast-Lord, and return home alive.
and vanquished the Beast-Lord.
I am eternally grateful.
one day became the chosen one when he was able to pull out the legendary sword,
You took me in when I was orphaned and raised me as your own.

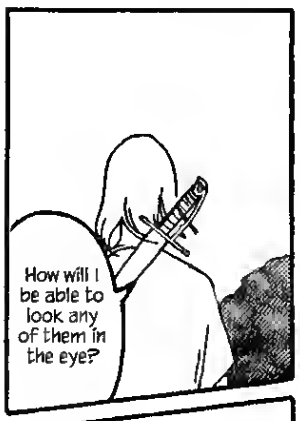
Seems like it's been ages...
Our hero has returned!
It's cause for celebration!
A festival shall be thrown in his honor!
Debt?
...But this is your home, too.
Did you...?
A few days ago, a chest filled with gold was delivered to the Village Elder.
I owe everything I am to this village.
It's a debt I can not hope to repay with gold alone.
since I last took this path home.
...

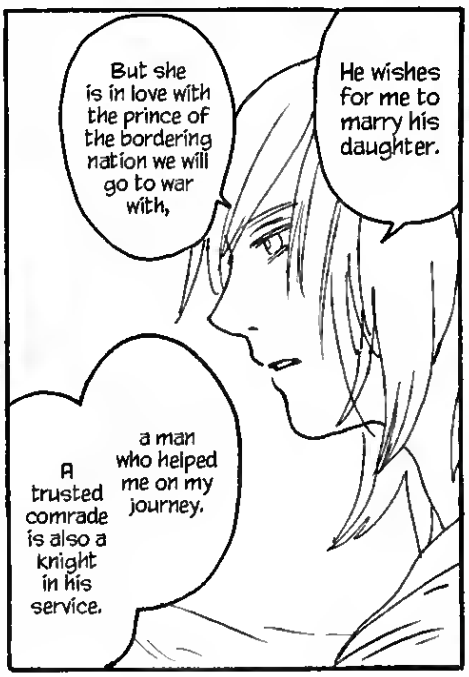
War is on the horizon with the bordering nation.


Hey...
This is why the King has summoned me back to the capital.


But now that I...
Before, people had no choice,
they had to work together to fight back against the Beast-Lord.

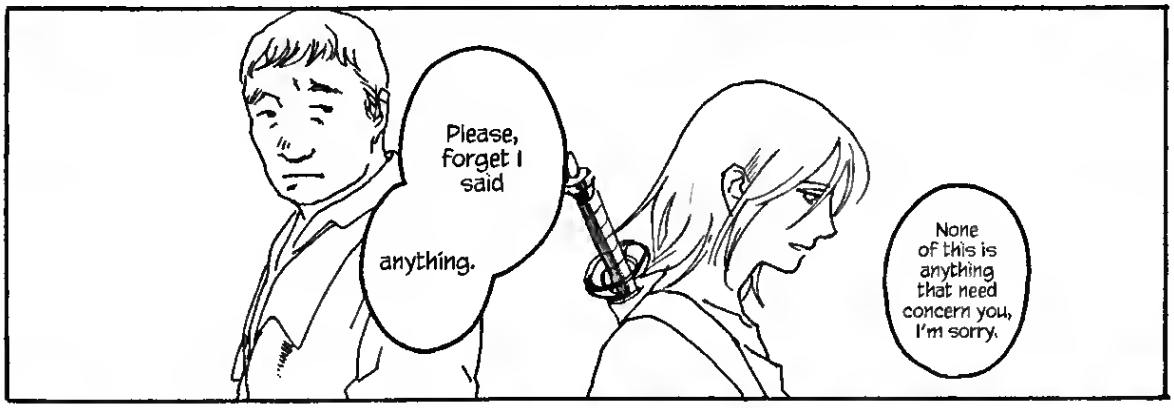
...Oh.


How will I be able to look any of them in the eye?

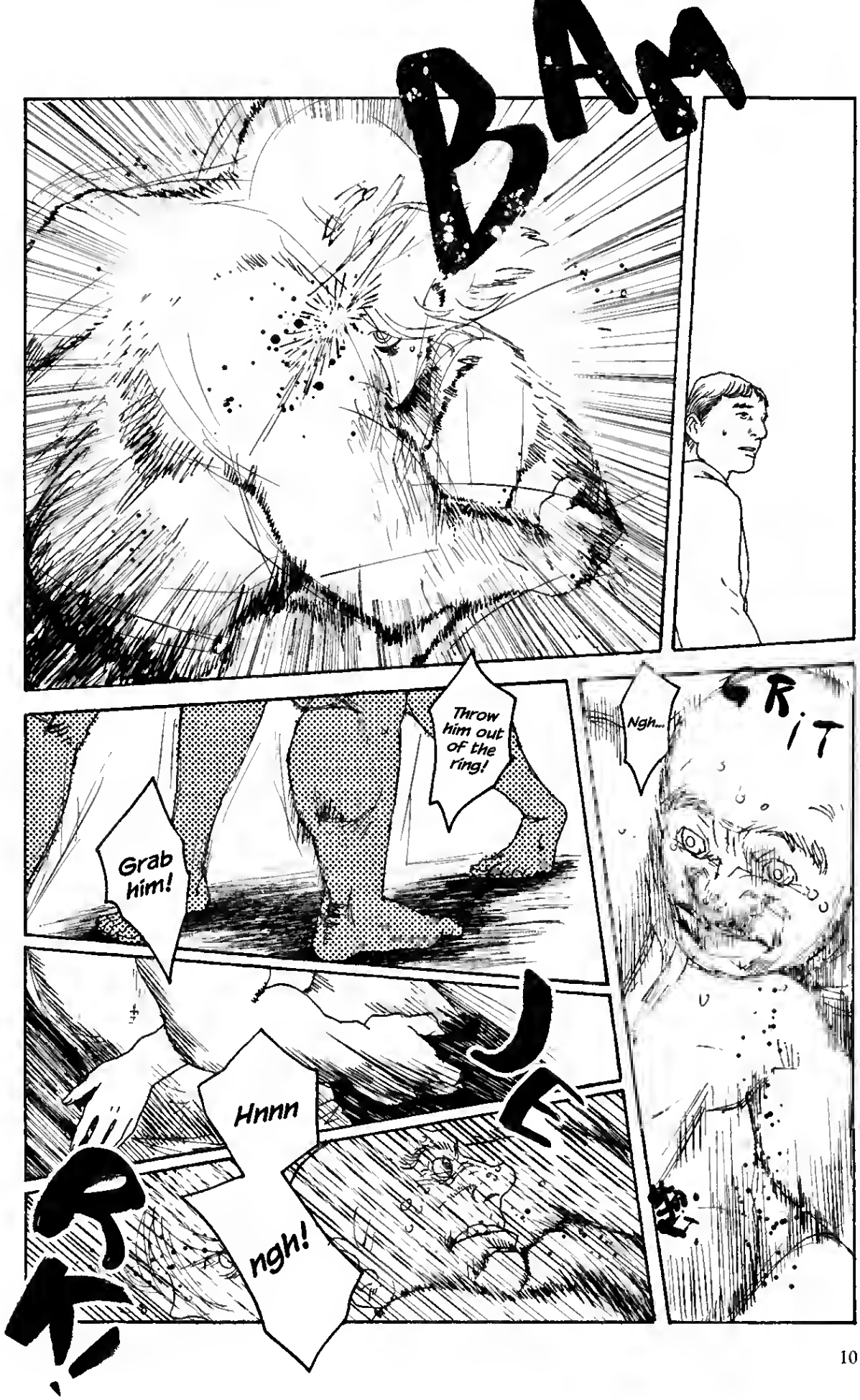

But she is in love with the prince of the bordering nation we will go to war with,
He wishes for me to marry his daughter.
A trusted comrade is also a knight in his service.
a man who helped me on my journey.

At first, I refused.
But the King alluded to the safety of the village and I had to acquiesce.

The preparations for tonight are almost complete! Come on!

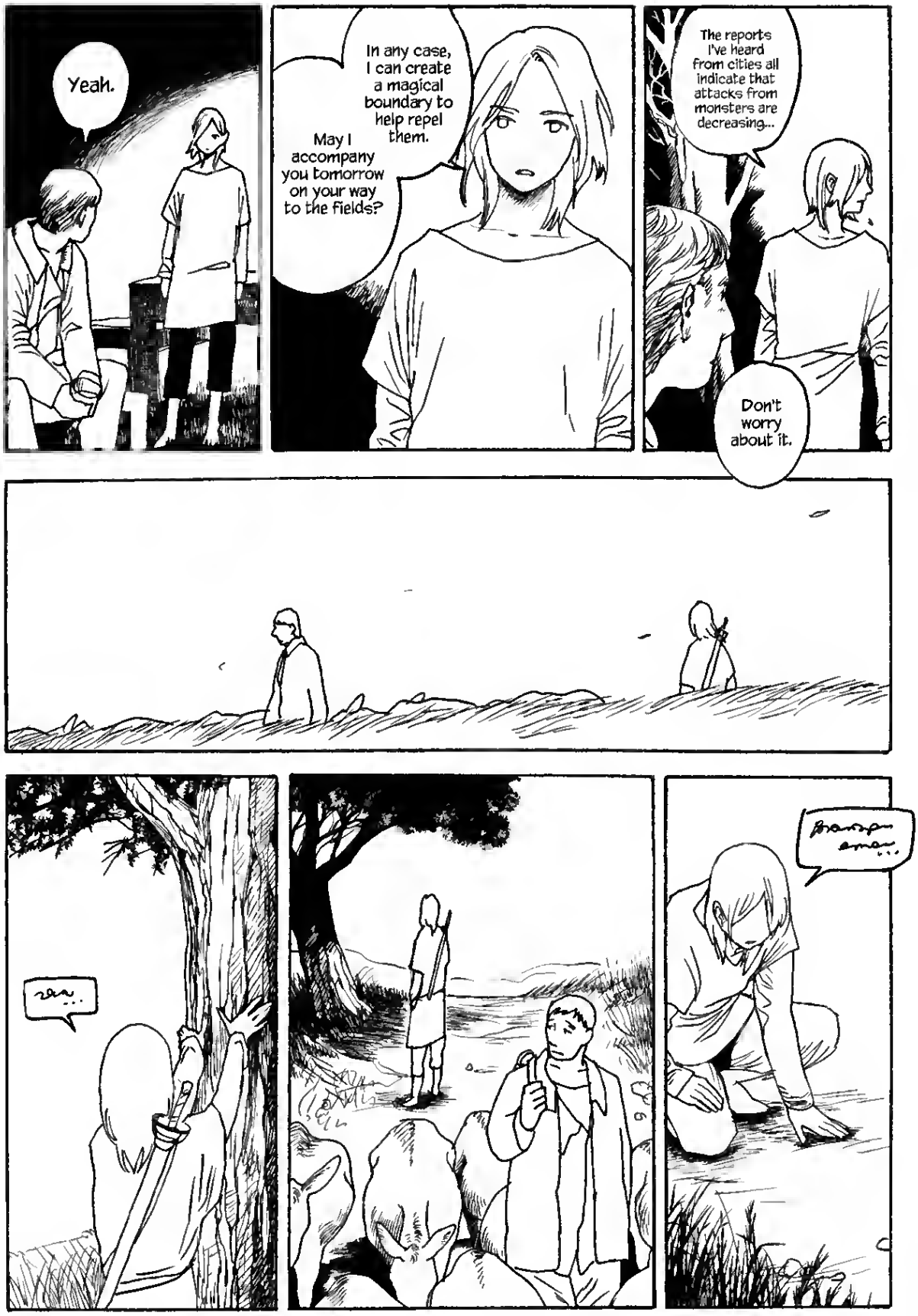

Please, forget I said anything.
None of this is anything that need concern you, I'm sorry.

Hey, "Hero!"
Let's see how well you fare against me in a sumo match!
Ugh!
There's no way a twig like you could slay the Beast-Lord!
Just ignore him.
Is he drunk?
WAHA HA
This will be good.
Yeah!


BAM
Ngh...
GRIT
Throw him out of the ring!
Grab him!
Hnnn
ngh!
GRR!

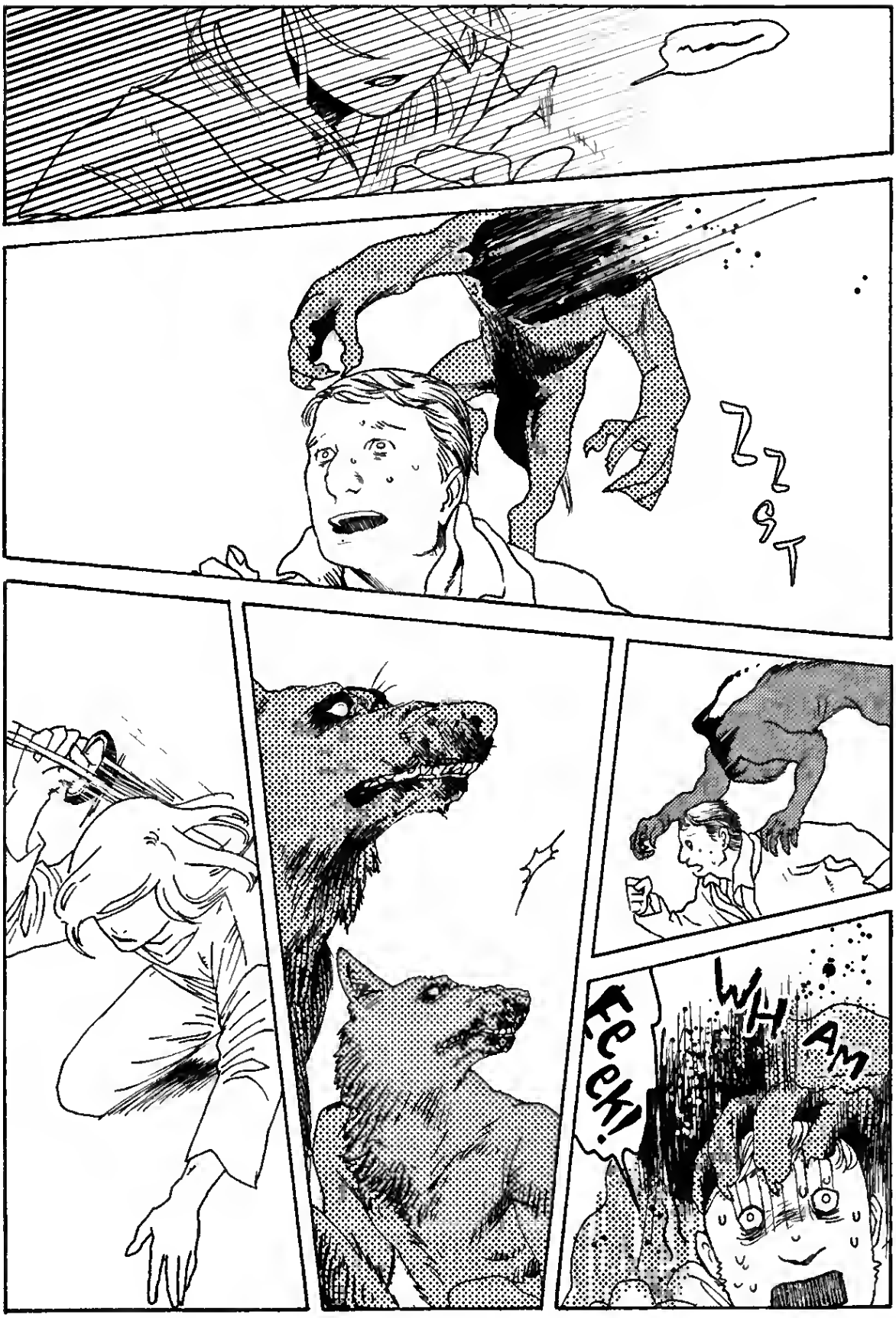
WA
AM
HA
HA
how did he defeat the Beast-Lord!?
WA
HA
HA
HA
HA
if he can't beat a common lumberjack,
Without it, I'm not much in a fight!
You jest!
When facing monsters, I strengthen myself with magic or anything else I can find.
A bit of a let down, I imagine.
You were going easy on him, were you not?
HA
HA
HA

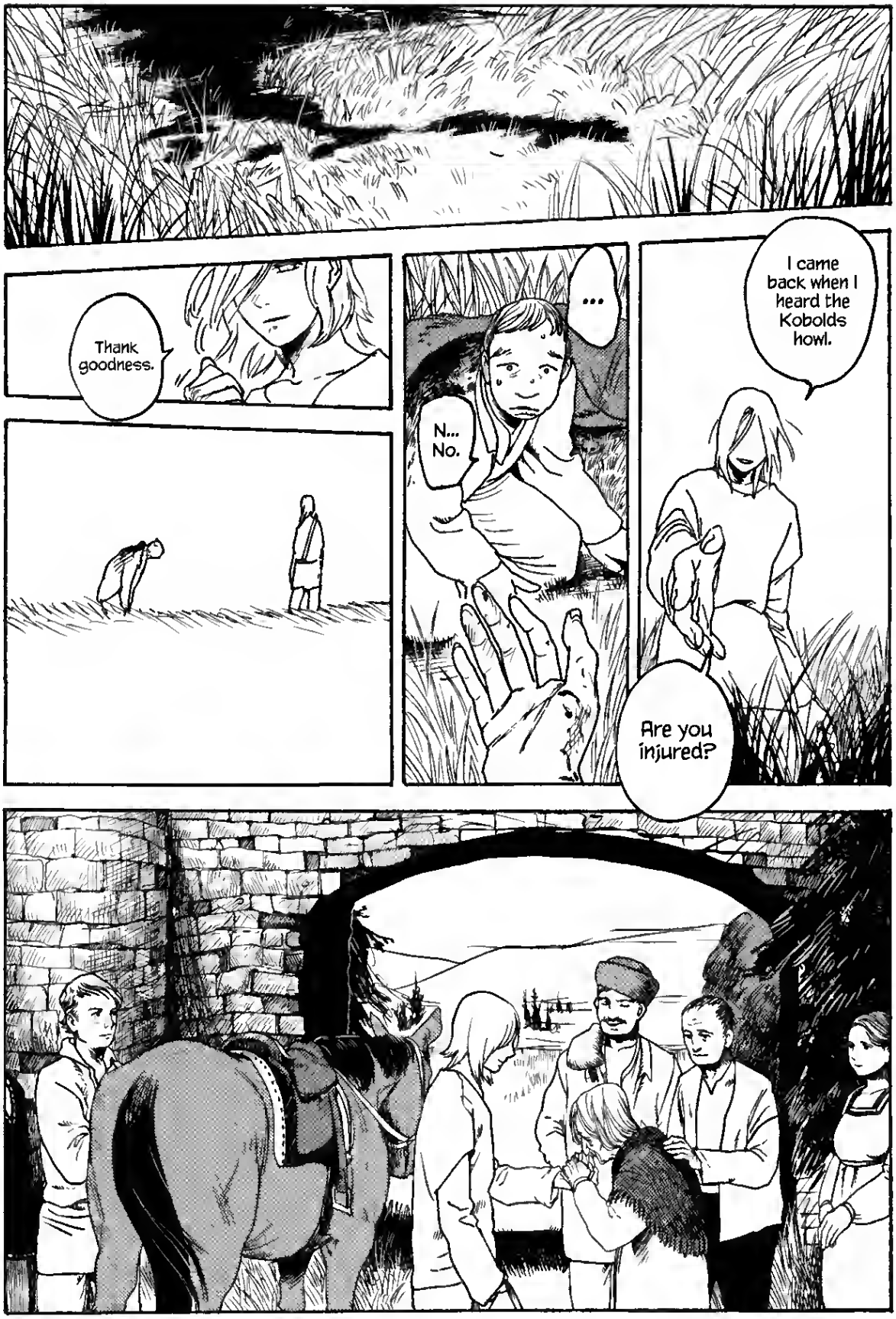
RNGHHH
HA
HA
HA
on three...
Hero!
Was the Beast-Lord truly vanquished? The people are doubtful and scared.
Our fields are continually being attacked,
and there are reports of monsters we had never seen before roaming our lands.
Hmm.
The Beast-Lord's influence was never strong here,
and the roaming monsters are more akin to wild beasts than anything...
Whatever the case may be, can't you do something?


Yeah.
In any case, I can create a magical boundary to help repel them.
May I accompany you tomorrow on your way to the fields?
The reports I've heard from cities all indicate that attacks from monsters are decreasing...
Don't worry about it.

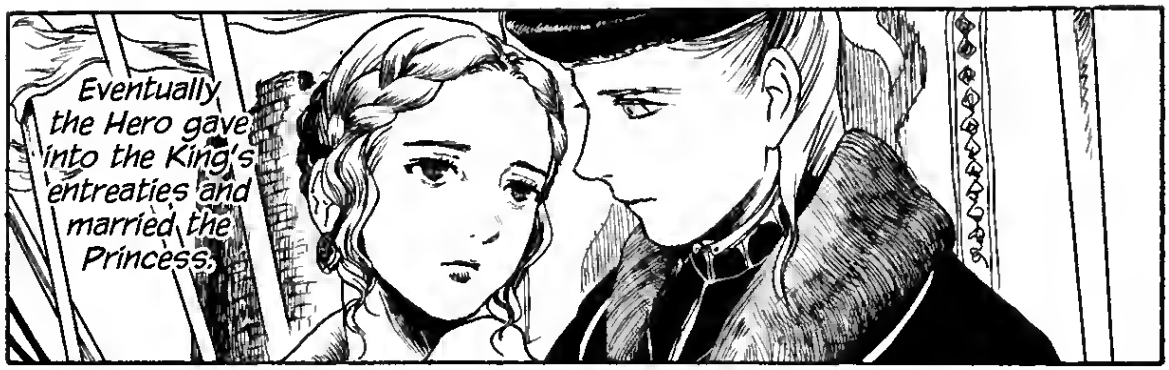
Without other weaker monsters to eat, they have been forced to attack people's fields and livestock.
This may have all been caused by the monsters being driven south out of the capital.
...
Be on your guard when you venture outside the village's walls.
You shouldn't have any more trouble with monsters in this area.
But the spell's effects will not last forever.
What's with him...? He's...
One's gone missing...

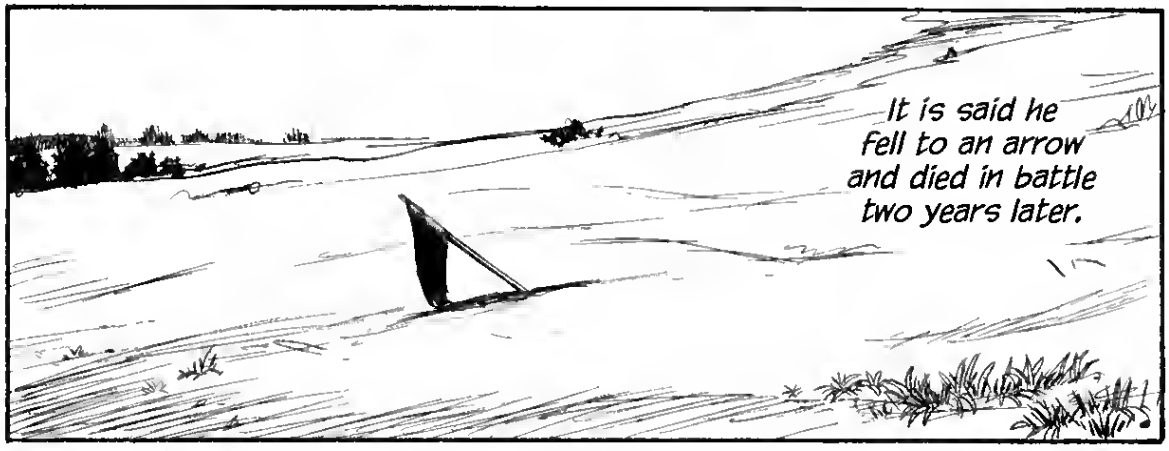
KSSHF
KSSHF
KSSHF
ZZSH...
GRRR
Uh...
Ah...
Ah...

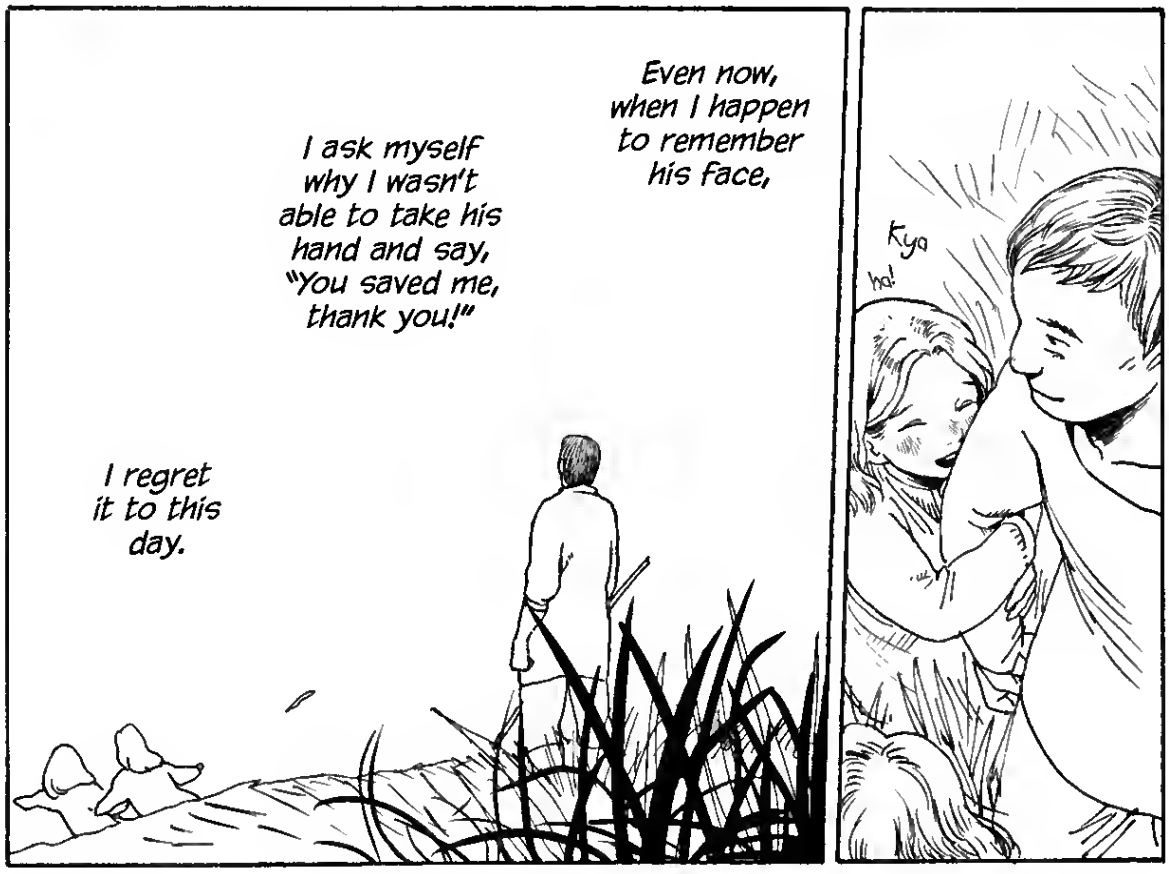

Zzzt
Eek!
WH
AM


Thank goodness.
...
N... No.
I came back when I heard the Kobolds howl.
Are you injured?

Soon after, war began just as he predicted.


Eventually the Hero gave into the King's entreaties and married the Princess.


It is said he fell to an arrow and died in battle two years later.


Even now, when I happen to remember his face,
I ask myself why I wasn't able to take his hand and say, "You saved me, thank you!"
I regret it to this day.
Kya ha!

The End